Quick Fix

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Quick Fix

by sourweather

Summary

Will hasn't spoken to Hannibal in two years, not since he surrendered. But he craves it, constantly. And one night, the craving wins over his own common sense. He calls Hannibal. Just to get his fix.

Notes

my brain has just been: you create intricate scenarios that allow you to write phone calls and text conversations

I wouldn't be surprised if this got the Ten Little Numbers treatment and got extended, but I'm marking as complete for now <3

See the end of the work for more notes

One More Hit

The sound of the phone ringing makes Will feel sick. What on earth is he doing, he can't be doing this, he would have to be insane to be doing this.

Another low tone sounds as the signal searches for its recipient. His knuckles are white on his glass of whiskey. He's had too many tonight. Way too much to be making these kind of life altering- no, life *ruining* decisions.

The call connects. Will almost chokes. His heart is racing with anxiety. He's crazy, that's the only explanation. After all these years, he's finally lost it.

"Thank you for calling the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, how can I assist you?"

Will swallows hard, but the moisture has left his mouth. "Uh, I'd like to speak with one of your patients."

The receptionist speaks quickly, reciting a long-memorized script. "Your entire call will be recorded and may be monitored at any time, during or after your correspondence. We maintain the right to share any pertinent information from your conversation with law enforcement, should the need arise. May I have your full name, please?"

He takes another sip of whiskey. "Will Graham."

The receptionist is quiet for a half a beat. "Hmm. that name sounds familiar. Do you call here often, Mister Graham?"

Will sighs bitterly, wondering if she worked here when he was incarcerated. "This will be my first and only time contacting your patients," he says. Just this once. Just to take the edge off.

"Al-right," she says, stretching it out like she's working on something else on the side. "And which one of our patients would you like to speak with?"

Will tries to center himself, calm his nerves. His voice still wavers a bit when he says it.

"I'd like to talk to Hannibal Lecter."

"Okay- oh." She's silent for a moment, cheerful veneer slipping. "Alright, I'll...tell Doctor Lecter you're on the line for him, then."

"Um-" He interrupts her, sweat blooming near his hairline. "Would you be able to do it without giving him my name?"

She sounds as nervous as Will feels when she says "Why?"

He sighs. In truth, it's because he's still considering hanging up. The frantic piece of him that's still waiting for another knife in his gut feels like hanging up wouldn't even be enough,

that he needs to pick a direction and bolt at the first sign of his voice through the phone.

So why the fuck is he doing this?

He might just hang up after Hannibal answers. Maybe hearing his voice would be enough to sate him for a while. Just a little *'Hello? Hello?'* to rub across his teeth. A quick fix. A hair of the dog that's bitten him, and Lord knows it's bitten him.

If he does feel satisfied with that, he'll end the call and go back to bed. Better for Hannibal not to know it's Will calling.

He pictures the scenario, feels bile rising in his throat. Hannibal hearing that mousey receptionist say 'There's a Will Graham on the line for you, Doctor Lecter'. Would he pick it up immediately, or make Will sweat a bit first? He'd purr out that sensual little *'Hello, Will'* that makes him want to jump out of his skin. And Will would be speechless. The sound of his name on those lips- Good evening, *Will.* To what do I owe the pleasure, *Will?* I knew you'd finally come crawling back to me, aren't you glad I made sure you could find me, *Will?*

"I'm uh, hoping to catch him off guard," he says through gritted teeth. Fuck, he hates himself right now. This is so weak. Shame burns the back of his neck like a branding iron. A mark of ownership that never seems to fade, along with the scars on his stomach and forehead.

The receptionist sighs, as if she's tired. He imagines this isn't even the strangest thing she's witnessed today. "Okay. Fine, I'll just tell him there's a call waiting. But don't blame me if he doesn't pick up."

A part of Will is hoping he won't.

He waits. One ring. Two. He drains his glass, contemplates refilling it. He doesn't want to risk the dogs barking and waking anyone, doesn't want to explain why he's drinking on the back porch in the dead of night. Three rings. He shivers, the early autumn air cutting easily through his pajamas. He should go inside. This is a terrible decision. It's self-destructive, really.

"Hello?"

And just like that, a magnet is attracting the iron in Will's blood and sending it speeding to his head. Not sated. Never, ever sated. Starving, *starving.*

"Hello? Who is this?"

Will's tongue feels heavy in his mouth. He has to clear his throat to make his mouth even consider obeying.

"It's me, Hannibal."

The silence is charged, buzzing around Will for an endless moment before Hannibal breaks it.

"Will. It's been a while."

A guilty shiver races up his spine. *Say it again, say it again.* Will sets down his glass before his grip can shatter it, settling to dig into the porch railing. "Yes," he says. "It has."

"What made you decide to call me, tonight of all nights?"

It wasn't just tonight. It was the night before, before, before. Hell, almost every night for the past two years.

"Maybe I just wanted to make sure you hadn't escaped. It's not like you to just fall from my radar for so long. I haven't even seen your name on a trashy website in over a month. It's suspicious."

Hannibal sounds pleased when he responds, like Will's already given everything away. "Don't worry, Will. I'm still here, right where you left me."

Will nods. "Good."

"You sound like you're on edge. If I didn't know better, I might think you've been understimulated without me."

He lets the statement hang for just a moment before adding "Where *is* your wife, this evening?"

A flare of anger rises in his gut. Then guilt. Shame.

"She's asleep."

Hannibal hums. "I wonder if she's noticed your absence."

Will chews the inside of his cheek. "Maybe she has," he says. "It's not uncommon for me to get up in the middle of the night."

"Do you still have nightmares, Will?"

Will sighs, sinking into a rocking chair. He's stricken with a frightening familiarity, like they're sitting down for a session. Maybe they are. Will lets his eyes slipped closed. Hannibal is sitting across from him, in one of the leather armchairs in his office. Like it was yesterday. An ache spreads across his chest.

"I do. No more or less than before, really. They're just more predictable now."

The vision of Hannibal in his mind lifts a brow. "In what way?"

Will shrugs noncommittally. "No new killers, no new nightmare fodder." He lets a drop of venom into his voice. "It's all reruns these days."

A slight smile quirks at Hannibal's lips and Will feels like a trapped animal. "Will Graham's greatest hits," he muses.

Despite himself, the anxiety bubbles out of him in the form of laughter. "Something like that."

"Does she know?"

Another wave of shame. Technically, he's not doing anything *wrong.* This is reckless, and a bit pathetic, and very stupid, but not technically wrong. But the guilt that's sitting like an anvil in his stomach seems to think otherwise.

"She knows bits and pieces. Surface-level things."

Hannibal smiles wider. His eyes sparkle in the glow of a nearby fire. "You still hold our secrets close, then."

Will sighs sharply, ignoring the blush dusting his face. "She wouldn't understand it if I tried to tell her. No one would." He chuckles bitterly. "You've isolated me. Again."

"And we are alone without each other. Again."

Will is quiet for a short while. He comes very, very close to hanging up the phone. "Are they treating you alright in there?" he asks after a fashion.

Hannibal chuckles on the other end of the line and Will feels that instinct to run again, straight toward Hannibal this time. "Did you truly fear that I was planning an escape, Will? Or was there another reason you called?"

Will swallows. The inside of his mouth tastes as bitter as his thoughts. "...I wanted to check in, I don't know. It's been a while, I wanted to know how you were doing."

He makes Will wait for an answer. "You told me that you never wanted to think of me again, the last time we spoke. Now you are asking after my wellbeing under the cover of night. What changed?"

"Nothing changed," he says. "I still don't want to think of you."

Hannibal looks away from Will, staring at the office windows even though the curtains are drawn. It kills him, seeing the other man so wounded, even if it's only in his mind. "I see."

"But I still do, anyway. I'd prefer if I didn't, but I do."

A soft smile plays at the other man's lips, but he doesn't resume their eye contact. "Do you?"

Will nods. "Often."

"And what do you think of, Will?"

He stares at the vision of Hannibal. He wants to reach out, to take him in his arms and kiss him until they both suffocate.

"It depends on the day," he admits. "Some days I think about you wasting away in there, waiting for me until you rot into nothing."

"It would be entirely possible," Hannibal concedes, not obviously affected by the confession. "You could simply keep me locked in this box, try to move on and forget me." The Hannibal in his mind turns to face him again, smirking. "Your decision to call me tonight leads me to believe that this option left you wanting for more."

Will cracks a wry smile. "It's boring. Waiting. I think about breaking in and killing you myself. Still can't believe you got out of the death penalty."

"Would you be satisfied, if I was executed?"

He licks his lips. "Only if I'm the one flipping the switch."

Hannibal laughs again. It's potent, and his tolerance is low from years of withdrawal. Will is already itching for another hit. "You may have to fight Alana Bloom for that privilege."

Will's smile falls. He looks around the office. At the bookshelves above them and the ladder that leads to them. Hannibal's desk, near the fire still crackling away. It feels so right, sitting here together. He hasn't been here in years, yet it feels like Will is simply returning for his weekly appointment. Comfortable, easy.

Like coming home.

"I mostly just imagine you existing," he says softly. "Sometimes I wake up before my alarm, at the crack of dawn, for no real reason. And a part of me thinks that it's probably when they wake you up for breakfast. I make coffee and eggs and I wonder how much you hate whatever they're feeding you. I was there, I know what it's like. They over-salt everything, don't they? It's all you can taste."

"Yes," Hannibal breathes. He sounds captivated and it fuels Will like nothing else. "It's dreadful, though I would imagine that's the point."

"When I'm sitting on the porch at the end of a long day, I find myself imagining you, too. Sitting in silence, lost miles away. Do you enjoy living in your memory palace, Hannibal? Am I there? Am I...are we happy, wherever we are in your head?"

"Happier than either of us are alone. Though the version of you in my mind doesn't compare to reality."

Will laughs around the knot forming in his chest. "Neither does mine."

He opens his eyes, and he's sitting on the back porch. It's dark, and chilly, and his ass is sore from sitting in the wooden chair for so long. Will looks out into the darkness of his yard, searching for the glow of a rogue firefly.

"It's when I can't sleep, that I think of you the most," he confesses. His voice feels small in the vacuum of the night. "I lie awake at night, wishing that I could just slip into rest, and I think about you. I wonder if you're sleeping well, if you have nightmares too. If the bed in

your cell is nicer than mine was, if they make you shower in the morning or at night- if your hair is still wet when you lie down and if it bothers you." He feels tears welling up in his eyes as the words spill forth. He smiles through them. "I wonder if you're thinking about me. If you miss me. If you wish you could forget me. If you're hoping I'll call or write or visit. And then I eventually fall asleep, picturing you sleeping too."

Hannibal sighs, pained and blissful all at once. Will bites his lip to keep from sobbing.

"Why did you really call me tonight, Will?" He asks, voice heartbreakingly tender.

"You know why," He says, voice thick with tears.

"Tell me. Please."

Will's never heard Hannibal beg for anything and it rips open a piece of his heart. It's a piece that should be desensitized to damage by now, but it aches and bleeds and writhes, desperate like a wounded animal. The piece that belongs to one person, and one person alone.

"I miss you," he says. His lips burn with it. "I called because I miss you."

"Will."

He sobs quietly, listening.

Hannibal takes a deep breath before speaking. "I rise at six o'clock every morning. The food is terrible but they let me cook my own meals from time to time. I do spend a sizeable part of my day in my memory palace, but Alana has provided me with books and drawing materials to keep my feet on the earth. I've taken to detective stories lately, a genre that has never interested me before. I practice portraiture. My depiction of Frederick looks more like a man than he does."

Will lets out a tear-choked chuckle, grateful to know that Hannibal is well. Safe. Still himself.

Hannibal continues, fondness curling around his words. "I sleep as well as I ever have, though the mattress is not kind to my back. I shower in the mornings, thankfully. My hair is always dry when it meets the pillow."

Will shuts his eyes, but doesn't picture anything. He just listens to Hannibal's voice as it floats through the phone and into his head.

"I think of you as often as you think of me, if not more. Whenever you find yourself thinking of me, it is safe to assume that I am returning the gesture. I do miss you, terribly. I ache with how deeply I miss you. I would never wish to forget you, aside from wishing that I could meet you once more and get to know you for a second time. And I always hope to hear from you. I'm so pleased that you called, Will. I can promise that I'll be waiting eagerly to hear from you again, the moment this call is over."

Will breaks. He curls in on himself, weeping. His emotions are bleeding together. Relief, agony, regret, shame. Love.

"Are there any other questions that plague your mind when you think of me, Will? I can answer them for you, if it helps."

He takes in a shuddering breath, trying to speak around his feelings. "Nothing else. Just...sit with me for a while. Let's give each other some company, just for tonight."

Hannibal is smiling, Will knows it. "I'd like that."

They sit in silence for the most part. Occasionally Will mumbles a 'You still there?' into the abyss. Each time it is met with a gentle 'Yes, Will. I'm here.' Will feels so calm, together in the dark with Hannibal. It's not healthy, he knows it. He's here with Hannibal Lecter, his guiltiest pleasure. The pleasure has outweighed the guilt tonight, it seems.

When Will wakes, it's to the sound of Molly's voice.

"Will? What are you doing?"

He grumbles, squinting into the early morning sun. His whole body aches from sleeping in the chair.

"Did you fall asleep back here?" She asks, casting him a concerned look.

Will stretches, wincing. His head is killing him. He notices his phone in his lap. It's dead.

"What time is it?" He asks.

Molly reaches out a hand to help him up. "It's six a.m. Come back to bed, babe."

Will nods, shuffling his way back to their bedroom. Six o'clock, when Hannibal wakes every morning. He must be exhausted- how long did he stay on the phone with Will last night? Until Will's end of the line went dead, just listening to him sleep? The idea makes him happier than it should have.

He pushes the thought aside. He's gotten his fix, for now. With any luck, last night will satisfy his cravings for a while. He's hoping he won't need to call again any time soon.

Once he settles into bed, Will finds that he can't sleep. A nagging thought keeps him awake. He's tossing and turning late into the morning, thinking it over.

Eagerly. Hannibal is waiting for Will to call again, *eagerly.*

And Will's eyelid twitches. His mouth goes dry.

Just one more hit. Just to take the edge off. Then he'll stop.

Just another quick fix.

Fresh Ache

Chapter Notes

> Thank you so much to Odessa for being so kind about the first chapter of this fic, as well as avalongates, ava_mcgee, nicoseehof, belovedeg and rranchiegirl79 for requesting more chapters!!! I'm so glad people like my 3 year gap content hehe <3 I hope yall like this continuation!

It's late. Later than he usually stays awake unless he has a reason for it. There hasn't been much reason for it, lately, and yet Hannibal rolls in his cot for what must be the dozenth time. He can't seem to sleep. He knows the cause. A dull ache, ever present, made sharper than usual tonight.

'I miss you,' he'd admitted, voice thick and helpless on the other end of the line, and it almost destroyed the both of them.

'I'm not going to miss you,' he'd insisted the last time they'd spoken in person. Two long years that feel like a thousand lifetimes ago. He'd tried to keep that promise, dug a trench between them so deep and wide that Hannibal could no longer see what lived at the bottom. He'd tried so hard for so long. Hannibal lies awake and wonders if the trying hurt more than the failing.

'I miss you. I wonder if you miss me.'

'Of course I miss you, Will,' Hannibal had answered. All in all, it may have been the most honest conversation they'd ever had.

He was glad for the ache, at the end of it all. The pain of hearing Will's voice would always be sweeter than the pain of imagining his voice in the silence. Perhaps the pain would stop entirely if he ceased thinking of Will altogether. He didn't recall feeling any pain before. Before he looked into those stormy blue eyes, heard that beautiful voice. And yet when he thinks back on it now, the ache is there too. Revisionist History, perhaps.

But tonight he's glad that Will had wanted to share such an agony, that hearing Hannibal's voice seemed to cast him to the sea in the same way.

Yes, very glad Will had called.

Lord, but it ached. So much worse than before.

It's always this way with Will. His presence and his absence. His attention and his abandonment. His love and his disdain and the intersections where they meet and cross and blend until Hannibal feels so disoriented that he wishes he had a map of his own heart. It's a frightening thing to lose. Control.

He'd surrendered it, nonetheless. His love nestled at the precise spot where desperation and devotion met, and he gave up everything he had as easily as setting down a freshly finished book. Only for Will. He is only this foolish for him, only this thoughtless for him.

It is always this way with Will.

The door opens, then. It's far too late to be anything routine. He sits up, and sees a mousey young woman place the phone receiver into the slotted drawer in the wall. His heart leaps to his mouth.

She yawns before speaking. "There's a Mister Graham on the line for you, Doctor Lecter."

It takes a moment to make himself breathe. Will. Perfect, marvelous Will, asking after him again while his wife sleeps. It's only been two weeks since their last call, yet the skipping of his pulse suggests it's been much more.

"Thank you," he says as the orderly leaves, staring at the drawer. He takes the receiver with shaking hands, forcing himself to speak.

"Hello, Will," He says, and he knows that the delight is clear in his voice but he can hardly bring himself to care. Not when Will sounds so pleased to hear the familiar greeting.

"Hello, Doctor Lecter."

That voice, like the warm sand after a long, tiring swim.

"Did sleep evade you again, tonight?"

"Yeah. Um, sorry if I woke you."

Like changing into clean dry socks after being caught in a sudden rainstorm.

"Not at all. It seems my subconscious was anticipating your call. I couldn't sleep either."

Will chuckles at that. Like spiced cider on a winter night.

"I wasn't sure when I'd hear from you again," Hannibal says. "This is sooner than I expected."

"It's sooner than I planned," Will returns with a sigh. "Though I'd entertained the idea of never calling a second time."

Hannibal hums. Of course he did. Poor boy, he tries so hard. Always fails, but tries so hard.

"It was difficult, talking to you again." He breathes out a soft laugh. "I'm afraid it's only going to get easier."

He shakes his head. "Why do you do this to yourself, Will?"

"Can I blame it on the whiskey?" he asks, and Hannibal feels like he can smell it on him.

"You've been drinking?"

"Not as much as I did the last time I called you."

Hannibal smirks. "Liquid courage?"

Will snorts. "More like a numbing agent."

"And what are you attempting to numb tonight, Will?"

A short silence. Hannibal hears the sound of ice moving against a glass.

"You're rotten at small talk, you know that?" Will asks, ignoring the question.

Hannibal laughs. He can't remember the last time he laughed. Will joins him and it might as well be Christmas morning for all the joy that bubbles in his chest. "I've never made small talk with you, Will. The first conversation we ever had was about the building of mental walls and you never once said that it was nice to meet me. You can't stand small talk."

"It *wasn't* nice to meet you," Will fires back. "You made a terrible first impression, and then you kept making terrible impressions for another two years. Your only saving grace was that you were terrible in a way that I found endearing."

Hannibal feels his heart flip. That warmth in Will's voice almost tricks him into thinking they've turned back time, that the two of them are pretending to talk about a case and that Will's body is free of scars.

Will coughs awkwardly. "A-at the time, that is," he mutters.

He opens his mouth to speak. To tell Will how dearly he's been missed. In the end, he settles for "What sort of small talk shall we make, then?"

Will huffs. "Hell, I don't know. Tell me about your day, how about that."

Hannibal smiles to himself. "There isn't much to say, I'm afraid. I finished a novel."

"Another whodunnit?" Will prods. Hannibal hears a bottle opening, but doesn't hear the sound of liquid landing in a glass. Is he drinking from the bottle now?

"Yes. The culprit was a minor, unassuming character who seemingly had nothing to gain from the murder until the very end."

Will chuckles. "It always is, isn't it? Fiction's unrealistic that way."

"And far less exciting than actual crime, for the most part."

"You know what they ought to do? Write a story where everyone knows who the killer is, and he still manages to get away in the end."

"Until he surrenders?" Hannibal asks.

Will sighs. Hannibal can practically see how he scrubs his hand down his face.

"...Yeah. Until he surrenders."

"It sounds more like a myth than a murder mystery."

"People would read it. Come for the Morbid Curiosity, stay for the love story."

Hannibal raises his brows, not bothering to hide his grin. "The love story, you say?"

"Gotta get them to root for the killer somehow. It'll sell."

"What about you?"

Will blows out a long breath. "Same shit, different day."

Hannibal tilts his head. "You've finally found stability, without me. Many people find routine soothing."

"There's a thin, blurry line between routine and monotony, Doctor, and I think we're both on the wrong side of it."

"I'm a prisoner, Will. What's your excuse?"

The answering laugh is sharp, with just a note of bitterness. "I thought it would be better. It's *got* to be better. Jesus, it's- there's gotta be a middle ground, right? Something between arguing with the guy at the hardware store and having my brain eaten?"

"Maybe for some people. I think you and I are doomed to be creatures of extremes."

"You and I," Will mumbles, and it almost sounds like an afterthought. Something he hadn't fully intended to echo, and certainly not with such softness in his tone. It compels Hannibal to voice his own recent worries.

"Were you happy, before we met?"

Hannibal hears wood creaking through the phone. Will settling further into a rocking chair, most likely. "At some points, I was. Petting my dogs and catching fish and getting my hands dirty- yes, I was definitely happy. Not in a lasting way. Not in the way that makes it easy to get up in the morning. But from time to time, before you, I was happy."

Hannibal nods, turning Will's words over in his mind.

"What about you?"

He furrows his brows. "I thought I was, at the time. Looking back, it seems so glaringly obvious that something was missing. It seems difficult to imagine that I didn't see it, yet I remember feeling perfectly content."

Will doesn't respond, and for a terrible moment, Hannibal fears he's said too much.

"...If you could relive any day of your life, as many times as you wanted, which day would you choose?"

Hannibal hums in thought. He isn't thrown by the sudden subject change, it isn't uncommon for Will to shift gears when he's bored or simply uncomfortable. "Am I allowed to change the course of events?"

"Let's say you couldn't. It has to go the same as it did the first time."

He thinks it over, observing the dark emptiness of his cell. He's spent countless hours at galas, dinner parties, operas. Many days preparing displays and cooking grand feasts, and many nights in the arms of an unlucky stranger.

"The day you killed Garrett Jacob Hobbs, I believe."

Will snorts. "Of course."

Hannibal feels a sense of contentment wash over him as he recalls that day. He hadn't wanted to admit it at the time, but even so early on Hannibal was enamored with Will. He'd written it off as curiosity, but in truth he was hopeless before they'd even finished breakfast.

"We hardly knew one another but our conversations came so easily, like we were old friends."

"You called me a mongoose," Will says, smirk practically audible. "And I *let you.* I don't know what I was thinking."

"It really was a privilege, seeing you after your first kill. Frightened. Wild. Utterly uncontrollable- though it didn't stop me from trying."

"I must've seemed so...unspoiled, to you. A naive, shivering man, kneeling at your feet and covered in blood. I'm lucky you didn't snatch me for yourself, then and there."

He nods in acquiescence. "There was something quite charming about your purity. I prefer you now, though. You are the version of yourself that I always saw in you, like Michelangelo seeing his David fully realized in the undisturbed stone."

"I was half expecting you to answer with the night you finally got my blood on your hands," Will says, slurring a little.

Hannibal shuts his eyes. It stings- not just being reminded of that awful night, but the idea that Will thought Hannibal enjoyed it. "No. I would never wish that upon either of us."

"Hannibal..." he whispers, in reply. He sounds striken, far away.

"And what is your answer, Will?"

"I..."

A sad smile rises to his lips. "You must've given it some thought. You wouldn't have asked otherwise. Which day would you relive?"

"I-" He coughs takes a slow breath. "I find myself trying to stich pieces of different days together. Making Frankenstein's Monster from scraps of the past. A morning in the stream, fishing in silence, alone with my thoughts. An afternoon in the Uffizi Gallery, finally seeing you again after so long. Dinner after I killed Randall Tier, you looking so proud and my knuckles throbbing where I grip my wine glass. A night in Abigail's hospital room, watching her sleep and trying to trick myself into thinking I was a good man."

Hannibal shakes his head. "I believe that defeats the purpose of the exercise, no? You must choose a full day, dawn til dusk. If you revisit that afternoon in the Gallery, then you owe it to both of us to also revisit what happened when we walked out."

There's a brief moment of deliberation before Will says "Then I would choose a day that I don't remember."

Hannibal tilts his head, waiting for more and knowing that it's forthcoming.

"Just a normal Friday. Something before the Encephalitis got too severe, I think. Morning with the dogs. Classes. Talk to Jack about whatever case he's got me investigating. A session with you, talking for an hour in your office. Maybe we have a quick drink after. Nothing spectacular or course-altering. Just a day that doesn't feel quite so...misplaced."

"You'd relive a routine."

"Guess I like it after all, under the right circumstances."

Hannibal looks sidelong, and sees Will leaning on his front porch. It's not the same house he lives in now, it's the old one. The one Hannibal knows. Near the threshold Hannibal carried Will over. Will takes a swig from the whiskey bottle in his hands, holds it out to Hannibal in a wordless offer. Hannibal takes it, searches for the taste of Will's lips on the glass.

"What if you could change it?" Will asks softly, frowning out at the darkness.

Hannibal swirls the amber liquid, watching how it catches the porch light. "I've always done what I felt was best. Some of my choices are regrettable, but I believe they were necessary in the end." He glances up at the other man, smiling softly. "I wouldn't change a thing, Will."

Will sniffs. His grip on the railing tightens. He lowers his head, features crumbling.

"I don't think there's a single day I wouldn't change," Will whispers, and when he looks back out at the yard, there are tears rolling down his face.

"And how would you change it? What would you do?" Hannibal asks, stepping closer.

Will looks up at him, blue eyes glistening with tears. His gaze flicks down to Hannibal's lips for just a moment, before settling back on his own. Hannibal leans in.

Will clears his throat. The sound rattles a bit in the receiver and it shocks Hannibal back to earth. Back to the empty darkness of his cell and the dryness of his mouth and the miles and endless miles between Will and himself. "It doesn't matter," Will says. "I have to own up to the Here and Now, right? We're both here. We both put ourselves here. Wishing that things had gone differently isn't helping anyone."

Hannibal fights the impulse to object, to urge Will onwards.

"Will you be calling me again?" he asks instead.

Will huffs. "I'd like to say no. I'd hoped the answer would be no."

Hannibal smiles despite himself. "It will be easier for you, next time. It will only become easier."

"Yeah, I know. That's what I'm afraid of."

Hannibal licks his lips. He'd like this to last a small eternity, but if Will falls asleep outside and half-drunk again, his wife may become suspicious. "You should get some rest. I'd hate for you to fall asleep on the porch again, that must've been hell on your muscles the day after."

Will chuckles dryly. "Yeah, you're right. Have a good night-"

"And Will?"

"Yeah?"

He braces himself, steels his nerves.

"I miss you, mylimasis."

Will is quiet for a moment before he sighs softly, so sweet that Hannibal tastes it on the stale air.

"...I miss you too, Hannibal. I'll um, I'll talk to you soon, okay? Good night."

When the line goes dead, Hannibal mourns the loss. He feels a bittersweet sort of longing coursing through his veins, but he also feels deeply soothed. Just hearing his voice, knowing that he is alive and near and thinking of him- it's a balm to his nerves.

He lies in his cot, prepared to sleep more easily than he has in weeks. He looks to the ceiling of his cell, thinks of Will-

And the ache begins again.

End Notes

Do you have a Hannigram idea, but don't like to write? Maybe it's something you've seen before but can't get enough of. Drop any prompts in my comment sections or contact me on Tumblr under the same screen name, I might make your request into a fic and credit you!

Works inspired by this one

Muscle Memory by refrigerator373

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